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Views of Russia's Second Revolution

By Marquis Childs

STALINGRAD — While the story of Stalingrad has been told again and again, it cannot be stressed often enough since it is the prime example of the tremendous effort of reconstruction that has overcome in little more than a decade the wartime destruction of virtually all of the industry and most of the cities of Western Russia.



The extent of the destruction, carried out in a characteristically thorough German fashion as the Nazi armies were retreating, has to be seen to be believed. The rebuilding is similarly on such a scale that the mass of statistics can give only a faint idea of the reality.

Eighty-five per cent of Stalingrad was destroyed in the battle for the city that ended with defeat for the Germans in February, 1943. Forty-two thousand civilians were killed in the bombing and shelling and Russian military dead were more than 80,000. In the museum that contains memorabilia of the battle and the revolutionary struggle for the city in 1918 when it was called Tsarytsin, are photographs of Nikita S. Khrushchev in his wartime role as chief political officer of the forces defending Stalingrad.

The story of Stalingrad is, in short, part of the fabric of Soviet life told over and over by every means of communication, and its swift reconstruction is a source of boundless national pride.

IN THE FIRST Cinerama film now being shown in the larger Russian cities, Stalingrad figures prominently. Called *Great Is Your Land*, the Russian Cinerama sweeps from city to countryside, from the Black Sea resorts to snow-covered mountains in the Carpathians and the swift rivers down which great log rafts are brought to the mills in the manner of the early American Midwest.

The sequence on Stalingrad concerns chiefly the building of the great hydroelectric project across the Volga River due to be completed in 1960.

The visitor is told that this will be the largest of its kind in the world, with about 10 per cent more installed capacity than Grand Coulee in the United States.

A massive conveyor system, built from one side of the river to the other, carries hundreds of tons of material an hour to the construction site. A town called Polzhski has been built to house the construction workers, and when the job is finished the town will be occupied by the employees of one of the industries to be created out of the new power supply.

A large aluminum plant will use the major share of the output. Roughly 40 per cent of it will go to Moscow on a line designed to carry a higher voltage than any in the world. Behind the dam a man-made lake 180 miles in length will be created.

Thus the claims fall into place in a mighty effort that can be duplicated on one scale or another in almost every corner of the country.

WITH MUCH of the construction moving so rapidly, particularly on the big apartment houses going up in Stalingrad, Kiev, Rostov and the other cities, it is not surprising that there are complaints about faults and failures. Letters to the editor in the newspapers grumble over roofs that leak, plaster that falls and plumbing that doesn't work. And almost everywhere except Stalingrad the shortage of living space is still great.

Not only apartments and industries are being rebuilt. In Kiev, half of which was destroyed and much now rebuilt, a conservatory of music that would do credit to New York has been completed. A six-story building to house the Academy of Science of the Ukraine and a research center is going up. Here in Stalingrad a dramatic theater and a large theater for light opera have gone up, with an opera house still to come.

What is hard to realize is that while all this reconstruction has been going on, new building has been pushed on at least as large a scale. Whole new towns—many of them in Siberia—missile and atomic centers, and other installations have been constructed. The taming of some 80 million acres of virgin land has gone forward.

It could well be that nothing on such a scale and so concentrated in time has occurred before. A second revolution is taking place inside this fantastic country, and it would be a rash prophet who would say where it will end.